

## James 1:13-18 – Temptation – Part 2

### Introduction

We have seen that God cannot sin, nor can He tempt anyone to sin. As a Holy God and our loving Father, His wish is that we might grow and be strong in Him. The trials that God allows into our lives for good can be twisted by evil forces to be used to entice us to sin. We must never accuse God of allowing us to fall into sin. This morning we will look at the source of our sin problem.

## Introduction

James explains five reasons that God is not responsible for our temptation:

- the nature of temptation (vs. 13),
  - the nature of man (vs. 14),
  - the nature of lust (vs. 16-17),
  - the nature of God (vs. 17),
- the nature of regeneration (vs. 18).

## James 1:13-18

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

<sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. <sup>18</sup> Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

## The Nature of Man

James 1:14

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

It is our own sinful nature that makes us susceptible to temptation. The phrase “**every one**” emphasizes that no person is immune. Every human being is tempted. The phrase is also in a tense that emphasizes the continuing nature of this condition.

There are two different aspects to the temptation process given in this verse. “**Drawn away**” carries the idea of dragging away, as if compelled by an inner desire. The Greek word was often used as a hunting term to refer to a baited trap designed to lure an unsuspecting animal into it.

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The second term, “**enticed**”, was commonly used as a fishing term to refer to bait. The purpose was to lure the prey from safety to capture and death.

Peter uses this term twice in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter in speaking of the ministry of false teachers.

**2 Peter 2:14** – having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, **enticing** unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children.

**2 Peter 2:18** – For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they **allure** through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

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Animals and fish are successfully lured to traps and hooks because the bait looks good and smells good and appeals to their desires and senses. Their desire for the bait is so intense that it causes them to lose caution and to overlook or ignore the trap or hook until it is too late.

This is the way that we give in to temptation. Our “**own desire**” draws us toward evil things that are appealing to our flesh. “**Desires**” here is a word that refers to a deep, strong lust or longing of any kind. Sin looks good and is pleasurable for a season, but there are consequences.

It is our own evil desires that cause us to be responsible for sin. Without those desires, sin would have no appeal.

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Not only are we lured into sin, we can place ourselves in situations where we are tempted.

Take a minute to think about the sin you struggle with most.... Now think how many times you consciously or unconsciously place yourself in a situation where you know that you will be tempted.

Our flesh hungers to fulfill its desires and will set up situations where it can have those desires fulfilled.

## The Nature of Man

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When we are tempted, we cannot blame God. There is nothing in God's nature that finds sin appealing. God cannot be tempted and does not encourage anyone to sin.

We cannot blame Satan because it is man's desires which makes evil seem more appealing than righteousness, falsehood more appealing than truth, immorality more appealing than moral purity, and the things of the world more appealing than the things of God.

Satan cannot make us sin. **He merely points out the things we can do and have and our own desires seeks after them.**

## The Nature of Man

**Romans 7:18-25** records Paul's own struggle with his flesh.

**Jeremiah 17:9** states, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

**Matthew 15:18-19**, Jesus states, "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander..

Proverbs mentions the "heart" 81 times in 78 verses. The heart here speaks of the inner man, the seat of our mind, will, and emotions. It is in the heart where we hold our values, and make our choices. The battle for sin is won or lost in our hearts.

**Proverbs 19:3** - "A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord".

**Proverbs 28:14** - "Blessed is the one who always trembles before God, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble."

## The Nature of Man

James 1:13

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As Christians we are saved and have the Holy Spirit, but there is an enemy within. Our “old nature” can take even that which is good and honorable and cause us to “lust” after it for sinful reasons. Satan temps us to fulfill those desires outside God’s appointed boundaries. Therefore we cannot state that God caused us to sin by giving us desires. The desires that God created us with are good. It is their misuse that becomes sin.

## So What ...

There is hope! God has given us a new nature and His Spirit. However, we must nail the “flesh” to the cross daily (Rom. 8:13). We must yield our weakness and desires to God so that He can strengthen us. We must understand our own vulnerability to fall so that we will walk moment by moment with the Lord in prayer. We must recognize the wickedness that lies in our hearts so that we do not trust in our own opinions and decisions. We must yield our hearts to Christ so that He can take control of our lives. He must be our King and Lord for we cannot trust ourselves. We are weak, but through Him we can be strong.

When we sin it is because we made the choice to sin. We could have made the choice to serve God! Let us set our hearts upon the things of God. Let us learn to love His ways more than we love our fleshly desires. Let us allow the Spirit to produce in us His fruit of “self-control”.